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UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 002537

SIPDIS

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FOR STAS DR. GEORGE ATKINSON
WHA FOR A/S SHANNON
ECA FOR A/S POWELL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: TSPL SCUL OEXC OSCI

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA EAGER TO PARTICIPATE IN U.S. GLOBAL SCIENCE PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

REF: STATE 174678

¶1. (U) This cable is sensitive but unclassified, and not for Internet distribution.

Summary

¶2. (SBU) Argentine officials responded enthusiastically to Science and Technology Adviser to the Secretary of State Dr. George Atkinson's proposed Global Science Partnerships program (GSP21) during Atkinson's visit to Buenos Aires November 7-9. Minister of Education, Science and Technology Daniel Filmus described Argentina's participation as potentially "very important," and the GOA's Secretary of Science and Technology said Argentina was willing to support the program financially. Embassy Buenos Aires suggests harnessing the momentum generated by Atkinson's visit by having the Department quickly select Argentina as a potential GSP21 partner and initiate more formal partnership discussions. End Summary.

GOA on Board

¶3. (U) Science and Technology Adviser to the Secretary of State Dr. George Atkinson traveled to Argentina November 7-9 as part of the Global Dialogues on Science and Technology framework of meetings (see septel for detailed report of visit). Argentina was the third stop on a four-country tour through South America (Peru, Chile, and Brazil were the others) designed to allow Atkinson and his delegation of nine to determine whether suitable candidates for the Department's proposed GSP21 program exist in the region.

¶4. (SBU) GOA officials responded enthusiastically to Atkinson's description of the GSP21 program. Minister of Education, Science and Technology Filmus told Dr. Atkinson and Ambassador Wayne that science and technology are among President Nestor Kirchner's top priorities, and that Argentina has traditionally had the region's highest levels of S&T attainment. Filmus outlined the GOA's plans to spur an increase in the number of Argentine scientists, and said the GSP21 program could be a "very important" part of those plans. Science and Technology Secretary Tulio Del Bono had earlier offered a similar assessment, even giving Dr. Atkinson a commitment that the GOA would be willing to

financially support GSP21. Both officials took pains to point out Argentina's suitability as a GSP21 partner, and indicated that they might have some modest resources available.

Comment

¶5. (SBU) Argentina has a relatively strong scientific tradition, and the Kirchner government has taken important steps to promote S&T education and research. We also already enjoy an excellent working-level scientific exchange, and Argentina is one of only four countries in the region with which the U.S. has signed an umbrella science and technology cooperation agreement. Those conditions, coupled with the GOA's marked enthusiasm for GSP21, make Argentina a natural candidate for the program. We therefore encourage the Department to select Argentina as a potential GSP21 partner and to initiate more formal partnership discussions. That decision should be taken quickly if the momentum from Dr. Atkinson's visit is not to be lost.

¶6. (U) Dr. Atkinson did not clear this telegram before leaving Buenos Aires.

WAYNE